Patterson, Samuel Legerwood

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by Charles S. Powell IV, 1994

6 Mar. 1850–14 Sept. 1918

Engraving of Samuel Legerwood Patterson, circa 1905. Image from Archive.org.

Samuel Legerwood Patterson, farmer and legislator, was born at Palmyra in the family home located in the Yadkin River valley in Caldwell County, the son of Samuel Finley and Phebe Caroline Jones Patterson. His father, a farmer, financier, and businessman, was a member of the state house of representatives and the senate, state treasurer, and president of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad for five years. Samuel L. Patterson was educated at Faucette's school, Bingham's, and Wilson's Academy. He entered The University of North Carolina in 1867 but the school closed the following year. He then attended the University of Virginia for one year before taking a clerking job in Salem. On 17 Apr. 1873 he married Mary S. Senseman, the daughter of a Moravian minister from Indiana.

Although a Republican, Patterson was appointed county commissioner and district superintendent of the census in a Democratic county. He served in the state house of representatives in 1891 and 1898 and in the state senate in 1893; in the legislature he was chairman of the committee on agriculture and was a member of many other committees. He was also a trustee of The University of North Carolina. Patterson was commissioner of agriculture from 1895 to 1897, when he was removed by the Fusion party. He was reappointed in 1899 and then elected by popular vote through 1908. Patterson Hall at North Carolina State University is named in his honor.

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